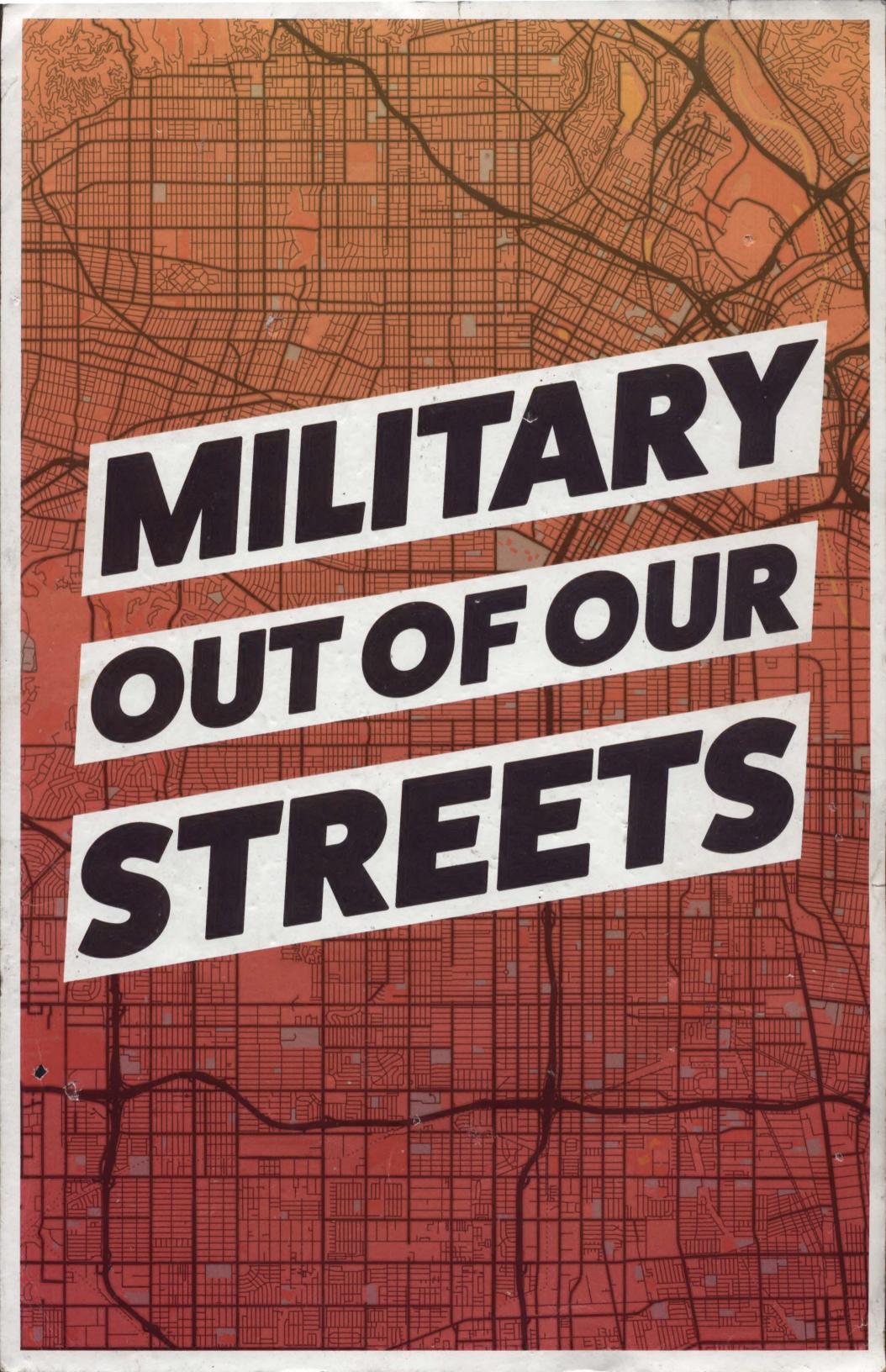
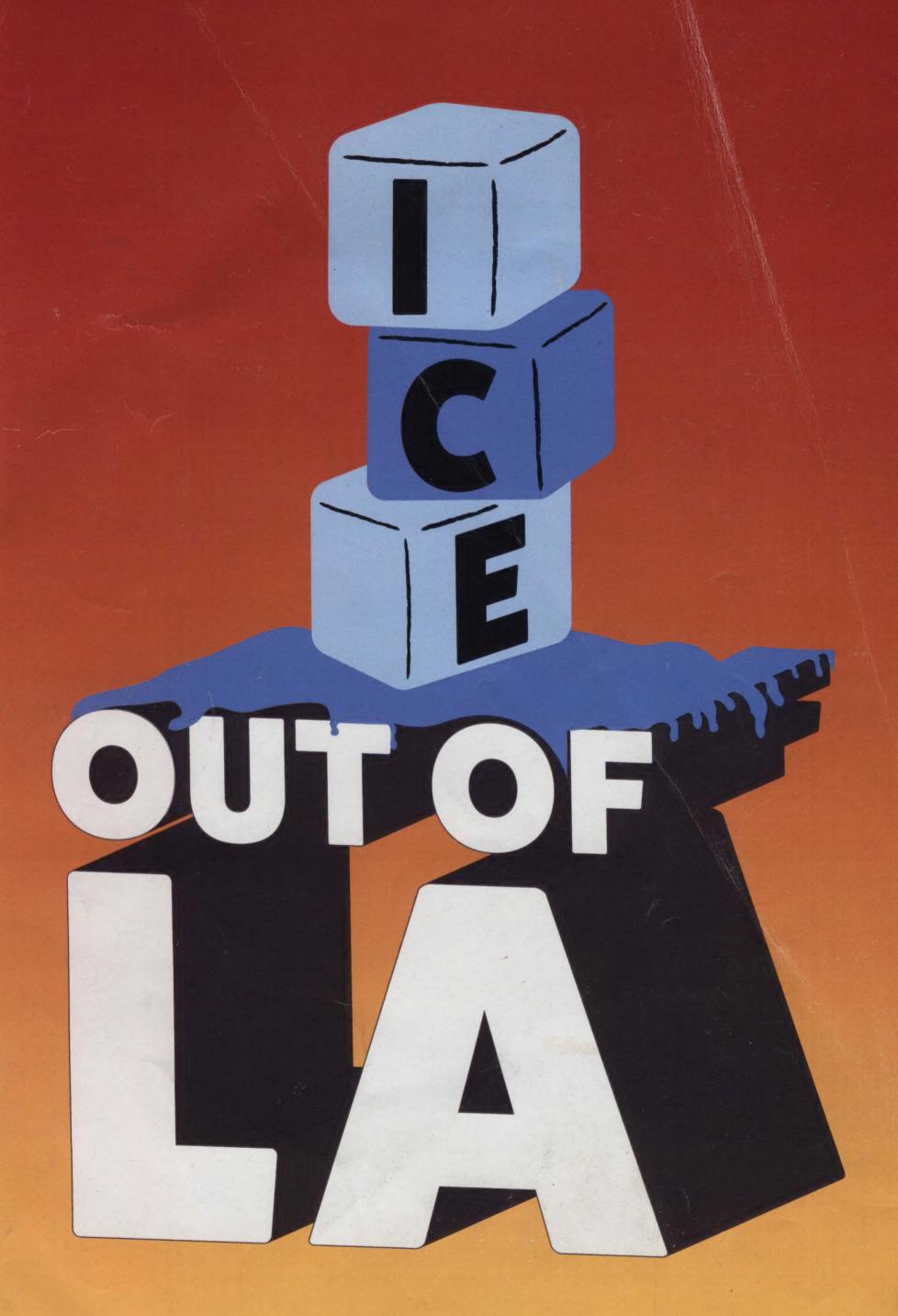


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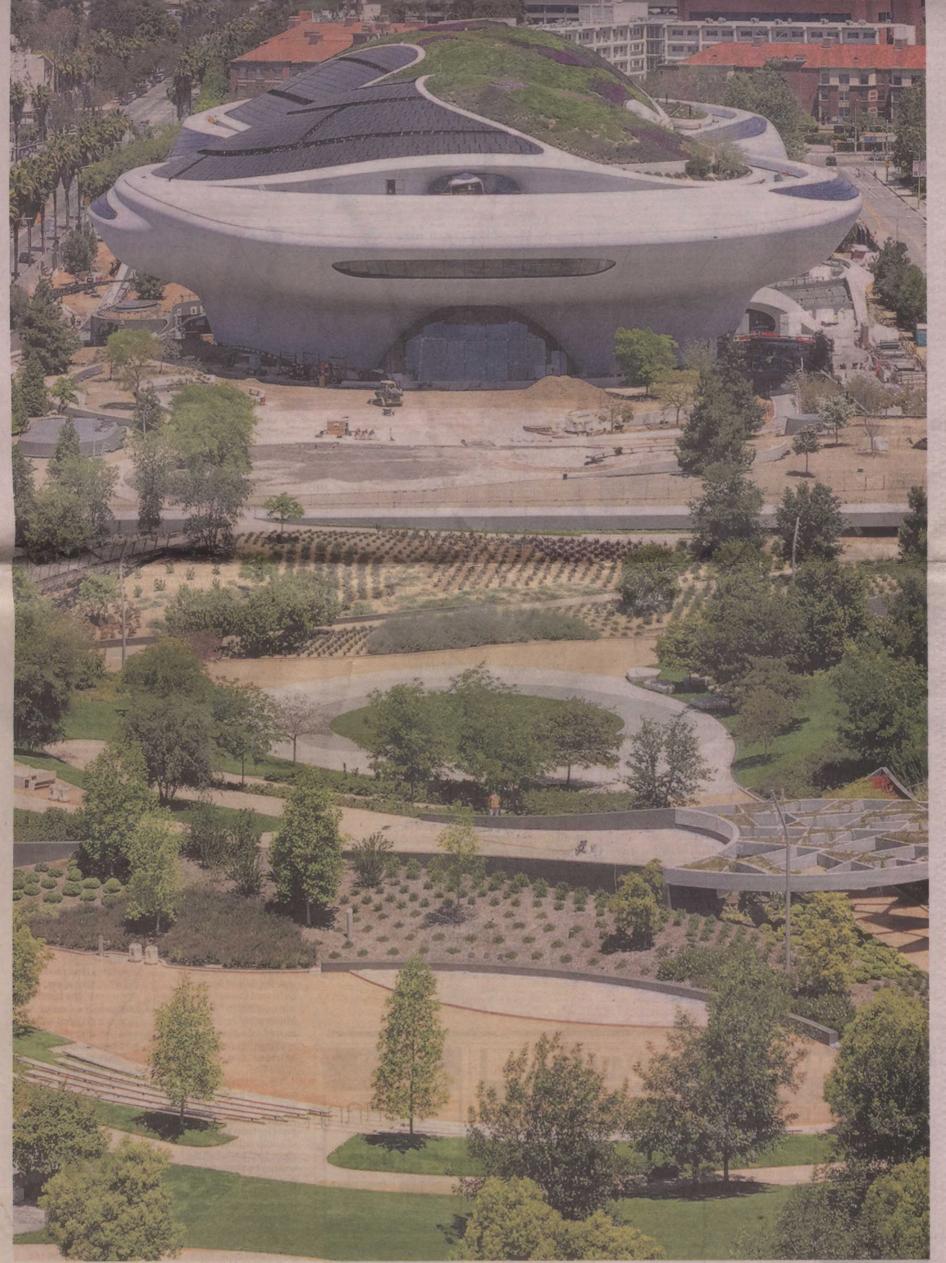


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Los Angeles Times

ENTERTAINMENT





MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

DESTINED TO BE A FORCE OF NATURE

The Lucas Museum's futuristic design will turn heads, but its sinuous, eclectic landscape is a wonder all on its own. E4

A THRILLING TRIO IS BACK FOR '28 YEARS LATER.' **E2**

JOYCE CAROL OATES WILL MAKE YOU SQUIRM. **E7**

WING THE EDS OF GREENER UTH L.A.

REA SHORT ON PARKS, THE LUCAS OM OF NARRATIVE ART IS BUILDING RANT LANDSCAPE FOR PUBLIC USE

BY SAM LUBELL

HE LUCAS MUSEUM of Narrative Art, rising on what be a parking lot in Exposition Park in downtown L.A., is devoted to droytelling: the comics of Charles M. Schulz ("Peanuts") and Alex and ("Flash Gordon"), movie concept art by Neal Adams ("Batman") liph McQuarrie ("Star Wars"), paintings by Frida Kahlo and Jacob nee, photography by Gordon Parks and Dorothea Lange, illustration, program Rockwell and N.C. Wyeth. 9 So when George Lucas and enlody Hobson chose Mia Lehrer and her L.A. firm, Studio-MLA, to the il acres of landscape around — and on top of — MAD Architects' g, otherworldly, billion-dollar building, the driving forces behind the Museum made it clear that the landscape had to tell a story too.

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a sinuous, eclectic landscape
unfolds in discrete vignettes, all
oting exploration and distinct
rience. Each zone contains





"This brings everything together," she said. "Design, ecology, storytelling, infrastructure, community. It's the fullest expression of what

landscape can be."
Lehrer credits Lucas with not just permitting her to explore these ideas but encouraging her to push them further. Lucas supported the rare — and costly — installation of mature plantings. Usually the landscape is the last part of a building to

The progress in the grounds is a bright spot for the museum, which





has been grappling with construction delays, the surprise departure of its executive director and, most recently, the layoffs of 15 full-time and seven part-time employees, part of a restructuring that a museum official said was "to ensure we open on time next year."

As the new building accelerates toward that opening, the vision outside is becoming more clear.

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SOWING THE SEEDS OF A GREENER SOUTH L.A.

IN AN AREA SHORT ON PARKS, THE LUCAS MUSEUM OF NARRATIVE ART IS BUILDING A VIBRANT LANDSCAPE FOR PUBLIC USE

BY SAM LUBELL

HE LUCAS MUSEUM of Narrative Art, rising on what used to be a parking lot in Exposition Park in downtown L.A., is devoted to visual storytelling: the comics of Charles M. Schulz ("Peanuts") and Alex Raymond ("Flash Gordon"), movie concept art by Neal Adams ("Batman") Raymond ("Flash Gordon"), movie concept at the Near Addition of Patha and Ralph McQuarrie ("Star Wars"), paintings by Frida Kahlo and Jacob Lawrence, photography by Gordon Parks and Dorothea Lange, illustrations by Norman Rockwell and N.C. Wyeth. So when George Lucas and tions by Norman Rockwell and N.C. Wyeth. wife Mellody Hobson chose Mia Lehrer and her L.A. firm, Studio-MLA, to design the 11 acres of landscape around — and on top of — MAD Architects' swirling, otherworldly, billion-dollar building, the driving forces behind the Lucas Museum made it clear that the landscape had to tell a story too.

Lehrer and her team studied how directors, illustrators and painters use topography to help amplify, among other things, emotion, sequence and storyline.

"We looked at the landscapes of myths and movies," said Kush
Parekh, a principal at Studio-MLA.
"How do you take someone on a

"How do you take someone on a journey through space? How does the terrain change the story — and how can it be the story?'

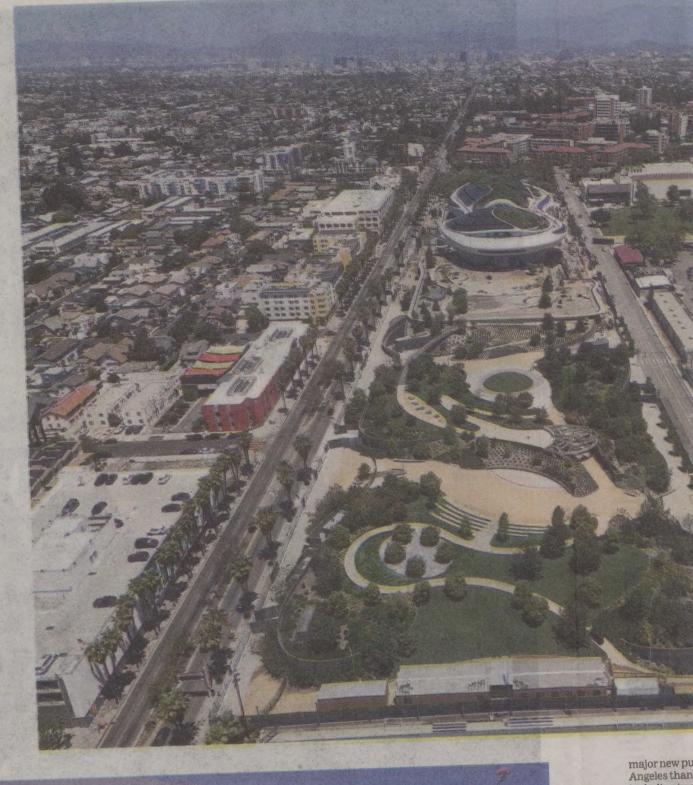
The result — which feels surprisingly grown-in even though the museum won't open until next year is a sinuous, eclectic landscape that unfolds in discrete vignettes, all promoting exploration and distinct experience. Each zone contains varied textures, colors, scales and often framed views. A shaded walkway curls along a meandering meadow and lifts you toward a hilly canyon. A footbridge carries you above a developing conifer thicket. A plant-covered trellis, known as "the hanging garden," provides a more compressed moment of pause. The environment, like a good story, continually shifts tone and tempo.

"It's episodic," Parekh said. "Each biome reveals something new, each path hints at what's ahead without giving it away."

A key theme of the story is the diverse terrain of California — a place that, in Lehrer's words, "contains more varied environments in a single day's drive than most countries do in a week." Foothills and valleys, groves and canyons, even the mesas, plateaus and plains of the Sierra and the Central Valley -Lehrer calls all of it a "choreography

Another, more subtle, layer of this narrative is time. Plantings were laid out to bloom in different seasons and in different places. Bright yellow "Safari Goldstrike" leucadendron, edging the meadow and canyon, come alive in late winter and early spring. Tall jacarandas, spied from a foothills overlook, emerge then quickly disappear. "Bee's Bliss' sage, lying low in the oak woodland, turn lavender blue in the early summer. Something is always emerging,

something else fading. "Every month, every visit, feels





ing traditional air-conditioning infrastructure. (Dozens of underground geothermal wells provide additional cooling.) In this part of South L.A., park

space is egregiously scarce, a remnant of redlining and disinvestment. This space — set to be open to the public without a ticket, from dawn to dusk — is a game changer, as is a massive green space on Expo Park's south side that also replaces a surface parking lot and tops an underground garage. (That latter project has been delayed until after the 2028

Olympics.) "It's hotter, it's denser and it's long been overlooked. We wanted to change that," Lehrer said of the



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Belly Up to the Bar

ERIC TJAHYADI WELCOMES
GUESTS FOR DINE OUT PASADENA

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Little Women Ballet company brings resilience to storytelling

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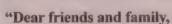
•CONSIDER THIS•

Bless This Land

A new kind of christening

By Ellen Snortland Pasadena Weekly Columnist

The day was clear, cloudless and hot beneath a powdery blue sky as my friends and I stood on the land where our Altadena home once stood. In response to an email invitation I had sent in late May, people came from the neighborhood and all over the city. We welcomed friends from our All Saints choir, my writing classes, Landmark, Ken's Macintosh user group days, my theater career, our grief and loss recovery group, my 12-step friends, and more. The email read:



The Rev. Tim Rich, the priest in charge at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, will conduct a blessing over our property on Wednesday, June 11, at 4 p.m. Ken and I would be honored if you could join us and lend your support as we begin again. Please bring something tiny, like a penny, to leave on our property. It can be a charm, or anything you can imagine that will leave future archaeologists scratching their heads! Love, Ellen and Ken. P.S. If this is too triggering or weird for you, I understand. You don't have to be Episcopalian (we aren't) to participate in this ceremony. You can be of any faith, including no faith, undecided or Wiccan... doesn't matter."

Many of us Altadenans are feeling a fresh wave of sorrow since the fires, myself included. It's as if we were sleepwalking through the initial months. Now, at the six-month mark, our fog has lifted, and our hearts are breaking anew. Experts warn us that this grief may last for years. Duly warned.

A few weeks ago, when I heard our beloved Rector talk about blessing a parishioner's burned-out property, I burst into tears. I realized we needed that, too. I knew we were selfishly asking Rev. Rich for his attention during such a nationally nightmarish time, given the military presence in our city and elsewhere. However, I also knew that our ceremony would serve as a proxy for so many of us — an opportunity for much-needed healing — so we forged ahead.

Being a theater geek at heart, almost anything I do has to have a ritual or theatrical aspect; this ceremony had both. To start, I read what I'd written aloud from a printed page, as I could barely hold my emotions together. "We've gathered because we need to acknowledge our grief and trauma, no matter the source. While today might seem like a ceremony for one piece of land, we're really mourning the broader losses: loss of human life, over 6,000 homes gone, a community changed forever, wildlife lost — deer, bobcats, mountain lions, birds — and the destruction of Altadena's cherished urban forest with thousands of years of tree growth gone overnight."

After my remarks, our white female architect, Cole Butler, read the land acknowledgment (take that, DEI enemies!) For the people who can't accept that we stole already occupied land from the Tongva-Gabrieleno people, please occupy somewhere else.

Then we took a show of hands of how many people in attendance had been impacted by the wildfires. Everyone raised their hands, whether because their own home burned down or family and friends' houses had been gobbled up by the voracious fire sparked by the greedy, criminally negligent Southern California Edison.



Rev. Rich had us take turns reading a service in a "call and response" style that he had prepared and printed, which included a "Litany of Lament." All the paragraphs touched me, but especially the one that read: "Guide us to be responsible stewards of your creation, to care for the earth and all living beings with reverence and compassion. Grant us the wisdom to make choices that protect our environment, reduce our footprint, and ensure a healthy planet for generations to come." The world's climate is suffering primarily because of greed, deception and denial by the oil industry. I always wonder how those CEOs sleep at night.

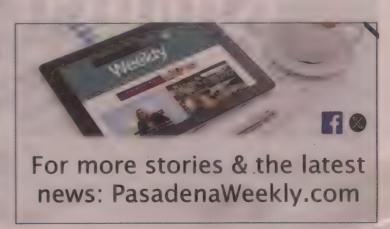
After the Litany, our brilliant All Saints baritone Michal Dawson Connor, who spent many hours with us at the house enjoying dinner and sharing movies, sang his arrangement of "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen."

Ken and I talked about all the events we've hosted at the house over the years: UNA gatherings, the premiere of my play, book launches, shaving our friend's head in anticipation of her chemo, Ken's and my wedding, play readings, creative writing classes, our Airbnb guests, Boxing Day parties, and birthdays. Then we handed out cups of seeds for people to cast, which will grow into plants that naturally remove toxins from the soil. We cast Arroyo Lupine, California Poppy, two types of California Sunflowers, Bluebells and Lacy-Leaved Phacelia.

Finally, in the "christening-like" finale, we toasted the land. We announced the name for our new house: "Casa Permanente." Ken and I are going to take the lead in building a wind-, earthquake- and fireproof dwelling. We will be Poster Elders for "if we can rebuild, you can rebuild!" It's mind-bending to be starting over in our 70s, but it'll be worth it just to stick it to the land-grabbing developers trying to exploit us at this vulnerable point in our lives.

Surrounded by our loved ones, Ken and I, along with our property, felt truly blessed, which was the whole point.

If you're interested in my online creative writing class, email me at ellen@beautybitesbeast.com. Many of you have asked if there is a GoFundMe campaign to help us recover from the devastating loss of our home and possessions. The answer is yes! You can donate at bit. lv/Ellen-Ken.



· ARTS & CULTURE:

Grace in the Ashes

Little Women Ballet company brings resilience to storytelling

By Bridgette M. Redman **Pasadena Weekly Contributor**

hen the Little Women Ballet company dances onto the stage of the Pasadena Playhouse on June 21 and 22, it will be more than just a concert. It will be a testament to resilience, community support and the enduring spirit of artistic passion.

mersive ballets three times a year based on the Louisa May Alcott story of "Little Women" and last December debuted its original, full-length ballet at Wilshire Ebell Theatre.

Then, on Jan. 8, the Eaton Fire destroyed its props, merchandise, signage, decorations and many costumes. With the exception of some costumes that were ding dresses for Meg. borrowed from the Pasadena Civic Ballet, everything had been stored in a garage at come together and help us sew many new the childhood home of the artistic director costumes, including a wedding dress for in Altadena.

Emma Andres, the founder and choreographer, said she put out a call to the community letting everyone know that outfits for the immersive performances, they had lost nearly everything.

"We got a very positive response," Andres said. "People made monetary donations, fabric and material donations. We

were able to get most things back for the immersive we had (in late May) and we're working on getting the rest of everything."

While the location for the immersive production, Heritage Square Museum, a Victorian home, provided furniture and served as an organic set, there were many pieces the company had created. These included Grandfather Laurence's slippers, The company has been performing im- Amy's paint brushes, books used by Jo and a memory house containing objects related to the "Little Women" story. They had accumulated vintage chairs, a large Christmas tree, a bed and decorations. There were specific costumes that they had received from a donor, such as Christmas apparel and the costumes worn during the wedding scene, including three wed-

> "We had several very kind seamstresses Meg and all the bridesmaid and flower girl dresses," Andres said.

> While most dancers stayed in the same the company had been collecting several new costumes for the full-length ballet, including multiple changes for the cast of 35 to 40 dancers. Many donations came from



Omega Cinema Props, located just outside of Downtown Los Angeles, an indepen-

dent, full-service prop house.

The Little Women Ballet company, ages. which was founded in 2023, began doing immersive performances to launch themselves as a company and to connect with Alcott fans. Throughout that process, they developed the full-length ballet that will be performed at the Pasadena Playhouse.

"Little Women" has been a cultural touchstone for more than 150 years, resonating across generations with its themes of sisterhood, personal growth and the dena. push-and-pull between societal expectations and individual dreams.

"With our immersives, we usually have three a year, you understand the story, but you don't get the full story," Andres said. "With the full-length ballet, it tells the whole story of 'Little Women' in a two- to be back here in our hometown." hour ballet."

Given that the houses the dancers performed in at Heritage Square are relatively small, the immersives were performed with a smaller cast. The full ballet includes dancers in the background as well as the main characters. The dancers range in age from 7 to 75 with the youngest playing Meg's children (Daisy and Demi) and the oldest playing Grandfather Laurence and

Aunt March. For the main characters, there are two casts; one to play the girls at their younger ages and one at their older

"We wanted to show the passage of time and this idea of family and how their lives have progressed as they get older," Andres said. "That becomes a really important component for Jo specifically as she sees everybody grow up and their family is falling apart in her mind."

Andres said the company is excited to be bringing the full-length ballet to Pasa-

"We rehearsed in Pasadena, I grew up in Pasadena," Andres said. "This feels very special to be able to do it at the Pasadena Playhouse because it is close to home, and especially now, with the year everyone has had. It makes it all the more special for us

Ross Clark, the dancer portraying Grandfather Laurence, also has deep connections to the Pasadena theater community. He was one of the graduates of the original Pasadena Playhouse College. Clark, who started his Broadway career when he was 7 and continued on Broadway throughout his teen years, is now a

SEE ASHES PAGE 9



ASHES FROM PAGE 8

board member for the Pasadena Playhouse and the director of the musical theater/ children's theater ensemble for the Pasadena Civic Ballet.

choreography at University of California, and delicate." Irvine and specializes in classical and contemporary ballet, wanted the "Little Women" choreography to reflect the story it was telling. All characters have their own styles of dance.

"For the more traditionally feminine characters like Meg and Amy, you see a very elegant, classical look," Andres said. "They are on pointe. Then with Jo, who is a traditionally more masculine character, she does not wear pointe shoes. A lot of her ballet is contemporary, with modern elements to it. You see more of her upper body being used and that allows her personality to be showcased from dance tional ballet norms."

At one moment in the story, Meg and Jo are going to a garden party and Meg desperately wants to make a good impression and for Jo to not embarrass her. Meg is dressed very elegantly. Jo is dressed more fancy than usual, but when she comes on stage, she takes off her pointe shoes and throws them on the stage in a refusal to

The choreography and costuming reflects the deterioration in Beth's health. Beth wears pointe shoes in the first scene and as the ballet progresses, she transitions to flat shoes. Eventually, right before

"We wanted to show the deterioration through ballet," Andres said. "At the beginning, she's this very classical ballerina. As she goes along, she becomes less and less capable of being that person. You see Andres, who earned her BFA in dance a lot of her movement become very soft

Another example is that Laurie wears white socks with white ballet shoes as that is a look that reflects what young male ballet students wear in class. She wanted to show that Laurie is a younger, immature person through how he was dressed.

"I wanted ('Little Women') to be a traditional ballet, but I wanted the choreography to reflect the characters," Andres said.

Andres, who is 26 years old, founded the company to launch a movement toward more ballets featuring women and their stories. This work is a tribute to Louisa May Alcott and other female authors and artists. Andres wants young artists to we see that she's breaking from the tradi- see stories that are uplifting and center characters they can relate to.

With the help of a generous community, the Little Women Ballet Company is rebounding from the fire so that it can bring its original ballet to town, continuing their mission to pioneer more ballets about women and their stories.

"Little Women" Ballet

WHEN: 2 and 7 p.m. Saturday, June 21 and 2 p.m. Sunday, June 22

WHERE: The Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Molino Avenue, Pasadena

COST: \$42-49

INFO: 626-524-3662, littlewomenballet.com or pasadenaplayhouse.org



Little Women Ballet was able to purchase replacements for some costumes lost in the Eaton Fire thanks to monetary donations.



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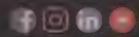
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IN THE BLEACHERS By Steve Moore



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WASTE FERMENTED,
IT GREW INTO A
BULBOUS LIFEFORM
GURGLING ODIOUS
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HMM...T'S KWDA
MAKIN'SENSET' ME



FRAZZ By Jef Mallett







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CURTIS By Ray Billingsley







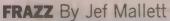
















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Los Angeles Times JUNE 22, 2025

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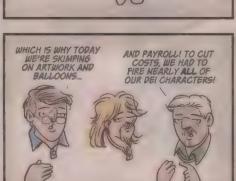






DOONESBURY By Garry Trudeau













CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia



THE WORLD TO SEEK OUT AND ELIMINATE

EACH OTHER ONE BY ONE, OF COURSE.



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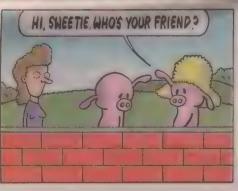




PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis



















DAY COMICS

Los Angeles Times

DOONESBURY By Garry Trudeau













CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia

MOM, WHY'D YOU NAME ME KEVIN? THERE ARE HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO STAND



THAT'S THE CURSE OF ALL KEVINS, HONEY, BUT THAT'S I CHANGE ONCE OH, YES. ALL KEVINS BEGIN TRAINING WHEN THEY COME OF AGE

Richard 9-11-24

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